

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 FDRE-00 EB-07 IO-13 AID-05 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7767

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL TRIESTE

AMCONSUL MILAN

UNCLAS ROME 8275

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, IT

SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP ON ROCKEFELLER VISIT IMPACT

FOR: TRIESTE PASS RACKMALES

MILAN PASS LAGAMMA

REF: ROME 7726; 7623; 7822; 7916 AND 8037

1. ONE WEEK AFTER VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER'S DRAMATIC VISIT TO THE ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE AREA, REFERENCES TO HIS VISIT AND AMERICAN AID HAVE FADED TO INSIGNIFICANCE IN NATIONAL MEDIA AS COUNTRY TURNS TO ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, EXTENSIVE AND GENERALLY HIGHLY FAVORABLE COVERAGE GIVEN TO VISIT IN TWO DAYS AFTER DEPARTURE (SEE REFTELS) INDICATES THAT US ASSISTANCE STILL OF PRIORITY INTEREST AND DETAILS OF AMERICAN AID WILL GENERATE CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE AND INQUIRY AS DEVELOPMENTS OCCUR.

2. NATIONAL MAGAZINES HAVE GENERALLY IGNORED VISIT WITH EXCEPTION OF SEVERAL TOTALLY SCURRILOUS PIECES IN RADICAL SOCIALIST IL TEMPO ILLUSTRATO, SHOWING CARICATURE OF VP ON COVER AGAINST BACKDROP OF MACHINE GUN, STATING THAT AID WAS UNCLASSIFIED

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INSTRUMENT OF CIA AND THAT US EARTHQUAKE ASSISTANCE WAS PART

OF ANTI-COMMUNIST PLAN. SOCIALIST-ORIENTED PANORAMA HAS REPORT ON QUAKE WHICH DISCUSSES POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS AND QUOTES "SOMEONE ON THE LEFT" AS SAYING: "IT IS A FACT THAT ALL THE AUTHORITIES AT ROCKEFELLER'S SIDE, FROM FOREIGN MINISTER RUMOR TO THE LAST REGIONAL OFFICIAL, WERE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. AND THE DAY AFTER THE DOWNPOUR, THE LOCAL DC DAILY MESSAGGERO VENETO, ALONE AMONG ALL NEWSPAPERS IN ITALY, SPLASHED ON ITS FRONT PAGE A HEADLINE OF NINE COLUMNS SAYING "AMERICA'S EMBRACE FOR FRIULI."

3. SNIDE COMMENTS AND INSINUATIONS FROM THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNIST PRESS CAN BE EXPECTED, BUT OVERALL MEDIA REACTION WAS INITIALLY HEAVY AND FAVORABLE. KEY TO FUTURE PLAY WILL BE TO PROVIDE DETAILED INFORMATION ON NEWSWORTHY AND VISIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS AS THEY OCCUR. INITIAL MESSAGE OF PROMPT AND GENEROUS AMERICAN ASSISTANCE, DRAMATIZED BY VP VISIT, CAME THROUGH WITH CLEARLY FAVORABLE IMPACT, BUT WE ARE NOW IN NEXT PHASE.VOLPE

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